

Introduction

The Indian Village Historic District is significant as a 20th century subdivision development that demonstrates the growth of automobile suburbs enabled by Fort Wayne's Park and Boulevard system. The district was designed by a prolific landscape architect and planner, Indiana-native Lawrence V. Sheridan. In addition, the district also demonstrates the evolution of home design from period revival houses of the 1920s, to simple, small homes designed to house returning World War II veterans, to the architecturally diverse designs and open, expansive floor plans developed in the 1950s. Most of the homes in Indian Village were built as the federal government established minimum standards for small homes, as new construction techniques such as prefabrication and site fabrication emerged, and during the national policy shift to the support of home ownership programs. For these reasons the Indian Village Historic District was listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

The National Register is the nation's official list of properties considered worthy of preservation. Listing on the National Register gives a degree of protection from any potentially adverse effects of state and federally funded projects, and may also provide financial incentives for appropriate rehabilitation. For more information about historic districts please call the Division of Community Development at (260) 427-1127 or visit www.cityoffortwayne.org/preservation.

Indian Village Historic District



Fort Wayne, Indiana

extant, (and) protectively restricted to insure permanence to all the natural and artificial charms of this great residential section. Much wider and deeper lots on broad boulevards, paved streets, ornamental lamps, sidewalks, and seventeen hundred shade trees soon to be planted in addition to the wooded sections of Indian Village, are but several of the long list of improvements which are in the Indian Village development."

The City Beautiful Movement of the early twentieth century called for the blending of natural and man-made elements to create the beautiful and modern city. This movement inspired the 1912 plan for Fort Wayne by nationally-known Landscape Architect and Planner George Kessler. The following quotes from promotional materials illustrate the City Beautiful ideals that were incorporated in the Planning of Indian Village.

"Nestled right in the most graceful bend of the beautiful St. Wayne's River, at perhaps the most wonderful stretch of Fort Wayne river mileage, Indian Village on one bank, looks across at Foster Park in all its wooded glory."

"...wonderfully accessible by motor, motor bus and trolley."

"Prevailing winds are from the southwest and west, leaving this section of Fort Wayne free from smoke and din."

"There will be no crowding nor crowding, no narrow passageways between the homes of Indian Village."

This modern Indian Village was wrapped in a mythical setting inspired by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's epic poem "Song of Hiawatha," based on the legends of the Ojibway Indians. The poems' Native American names, such as Hiawatha, Nokomis, Manito, Muscoday, and Wenonah appear as the names of many of the village streets. Elaborate brick and stone entry markers with a beautifully carved Native American with an elaborate headdress define the main entry into the subdivision. A scenic grouping of concrete teepees is located on the main esplanade. These features are based on 1920s popular culture images of Plains Indians.

The City and Suburban Building Company used the Native American theme to market Indian Villages as a lifestyle, a return to a quieter time, separated from the dirt and noise of the central city and the presence of smoke-belching factories. Located at the very edge of the city limits, village residents of the 1920s and 1930s nevertheless had access to three modes of modern transportation to carry them downtown to work or

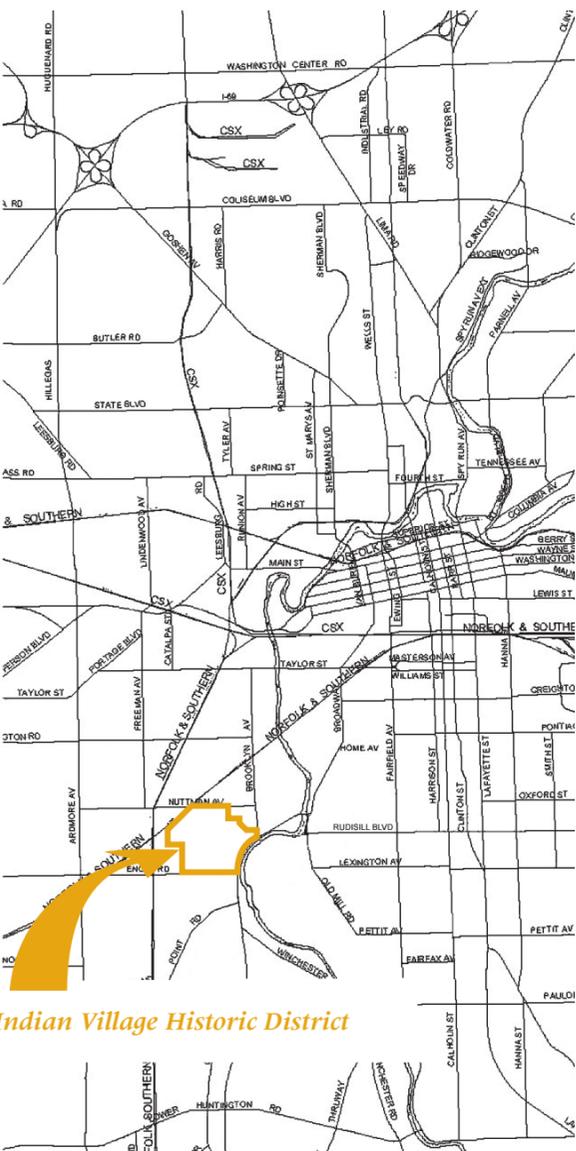


Development in Indian Village nearly ceased during the Great Depression. The City and Suburban Building Company lost control of the project and declared bankruptcy about 1930. Local homebuilder John R. Worthman assumed control of the Indian Village subdivision after World War II. He continued to enlarge Sheridan's basic design of Indian Village with new additions, while maintaining the established street widths, tree plantings, and park strips. Restrictive covenants were used, including building set-back limits, the size and placement of homes on the lots, and a minimum value of homes set at no less than \$6,000. Worthman also continued to vary lot sizes to reduce the potential for monotonous streetscapes, disallowed fenced front yards, and prohibited commercial activity of any kind on any lot. The plat for Section C called for the establishment of an Indian Village Community Association and fixed an annual fee for the purpose of maintaining public areas.

When the wave of new home-building swept over Fort Wayne after World War II, Worthman positioned his company at its apex and stayed there. To meet the rapidly growing housing needs for the returning veterans, meet FHA standards, and increase the speed of construction without sacrificing quality, Worthman used an assembly-line method of completing a block of homes he called "site fabrication." By setting up his cutting equipment on-site and establishing an assembly area within the village, his crews could cut the lumber for multiple structures at the same time and frame the homes over multiple, already-prepared basements dug in inclement weather. Building clusters of similar homes with assembly-line methods of construction realized economies of scale by minimizing loss of time through movement of crews and maximizing the use of construction equipment and materials on-site. However, variations in architectural details were retained to combat the monotony associated with other period subdivisions.

The company used the "trend home" concept each year during National Home Week as the means to educate new buyers on the up and coming home styles and furnishings. Worthman, Inc. featured a "trend home" in the local newspaper in September each year as part of National Home Week. The week presented local builders/developers with an opportunity to showcase Indian Village continues to provide a haven from the tribulations of today's busy lifestyles and the noise, grit, and tension of a big city just as it did during its early days.

Location



Indian Village Historic District

Acknowledgements

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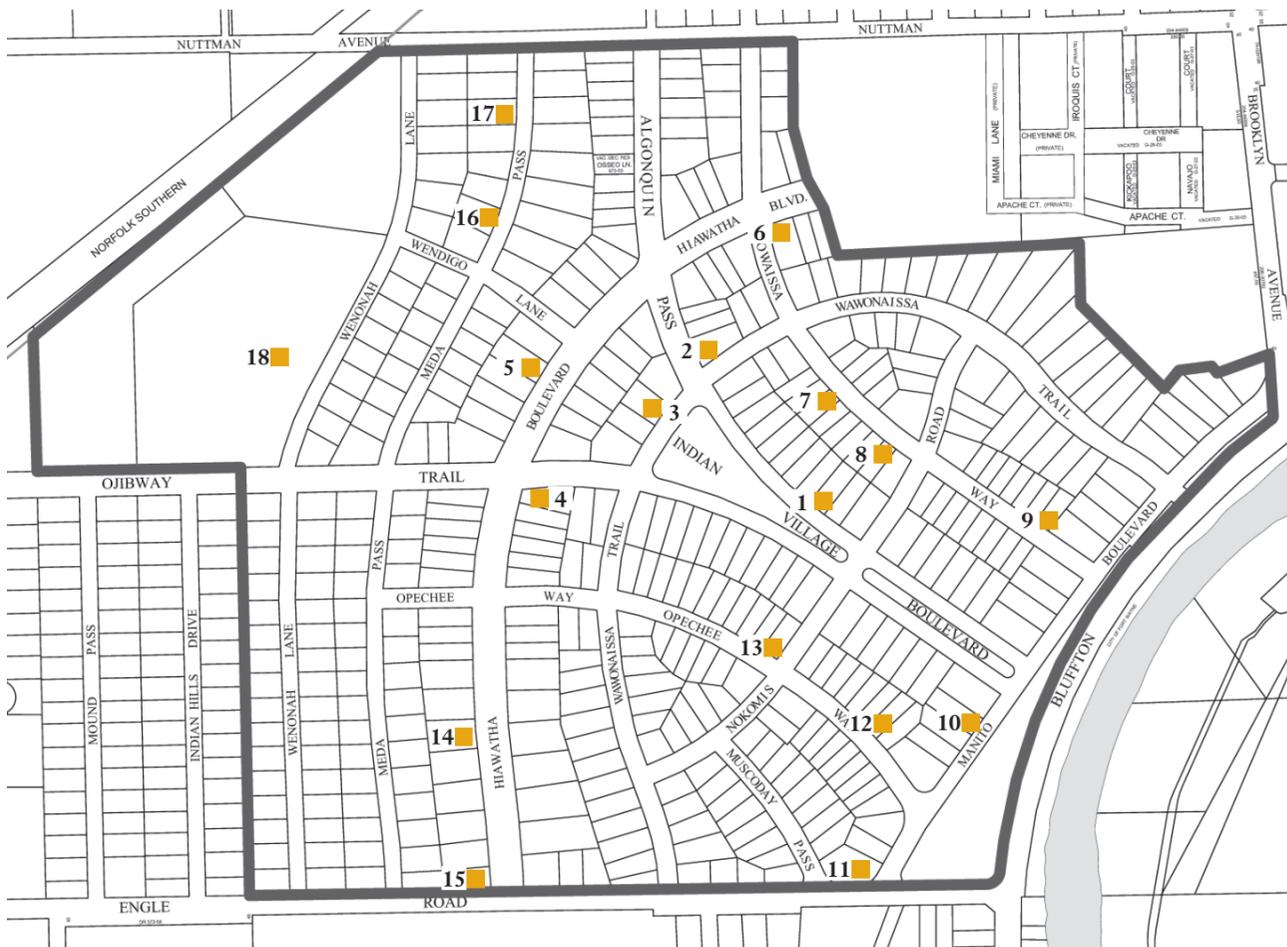
John Warner, Historical Consultant

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Indian Village marketing included reduced-scale teepees as part of the enhancements and enticements to attract home builders and buyers. They are constructed of concrete and located on the main Indian Village Boulevard.

This project has been funded in part by a grant from the U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service's Historic Preservation Fund, administered by the Indiana Department of Natural Resources, Division of Historic Preservation and Archaeology.



Indian Village Historic District

Please respect the occupants' privacy by viewing all listed homes from the street.

**Paul & Florence
Staeble House**
2314 Indian Village Blvd.
Tudor Revival, c.1931

The Tudor style was extremely popular in the 1920s and 1930s. The steep, pointed gables; prominent chimney; stucco and half-timbered upper walls; arched entry; and multi-pane casement windows are all hallmarks of the style. The masonry walls and chimney are an interesting mix of brick and stone with "weeping" mortar designed to give the house a more romantic, rustic feeling.



**Donald & Margaret
Spiers House**
2320 Wawonaissa Trail
Contemporary, c.1950

Thoroughly modern yet influenced by the earlier Craftsman and Prairie styles, the gabled subtype of the Contemporary style features wide gables and deep eaves, often with exposed roof beams. The broad yet slender chimney with its narrow courses of stone is another character defining feature. Donald Spiers was an office manager at IBM.



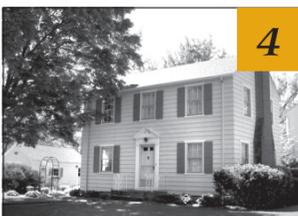
**John & Margaret
Banning House**
Noble Miller, architect
3710 Wawonaissa Trail
Spanish Revival, 1929

Totally unique, this house was designed by architect Noble Miller for John Banning, Secretary and Sales manager of the City and Suburban Company, the original developer of Indian Village. With its tower, arched windows, tile and stucco walls - which were originally tinted in green, buff, and pink - this house was and is commanding presence at the end of the main boulevard.



**Don & Louise
Vordermark House**
3801 Hiawatha Blvd.
Colonial Revival, c.1948

This classic post-war Colonial features a balanced façade, multi-pane windows with decorative shutters, a classically detailed entry with a decorative pediment, minimal eaves, and a prominent chimney on the side. Mr. Vordermark was a supervisor with the Lincoln National Life Insurance Company.



**Harry & Helen
Plymale House**
3710 Hiawatha Blvd.
Minimal Traditional, c. 1948

Popular through the mid 1950s, the Minimal Traditional style resulted from a general simplification in building during the economic depression of the 1930s. Houses in the style reflect preceding styles such as the Tudor or Colonial Revival, but roof pitches are lower, eaves are very shallow, and decorative detailing is minimal although there is often a large chimney. Small entry porches are common. Mr. Plymale worked for the Princess Coal Company.



**Herbert & Rhea
Thinnes House**
2251 Hiawatha Blvd.
Cape Cod, c.1948

This house form: one story with a very steep side-gabled roof, minimal eaves, and a slightly recessed side wing; was popular in Indian Village. This home features a shallow box-bay on the wing and a brick chimney enhanced with irregular pieces of stone. Herbert Thinnes was a train master for the New York Central and St. Louis railroad.



**Raymond & Mary
McKibben House**
2227 Owaissa Way
Garrison Colonial, c.1948

Popular from the 1930s through the 1950s, Garrison Colonials are defined by the second floor slightly overhanging the first. The minimal eaves, smooth concrete block construction, and geometric detailing around the front door give this house a unique, distinctly modern twist on a traditional style. Mr. McKibben was an assistant superintendent at Dana Corp.



**Ralph & Mabel
Beatty House**
2207 Owaissa Way
Tudor Revival, c.1929

The abundance of unusual details and cottage-like scale lend a storybook quality to this Tudor style home. The pointed gables, tall chimney, wing wall with arched gateway, random bricks projecting from the walls, stone details, variety of windows, and eyebrow dormer contribute to the fairytale character. A matching garage is visible from the end of the driveway. Mr. Beatty was a masonry contractor.



**Frank & Anna
Boitet House**
2120 Owaissa Way
Colonial Revival, c.1929

One of the earlier homes in the neighborhood, this Colonial features the side-gabled roof with returns, multi-pane windows, and symmetry characteristic of the style. The large, brick chimney, tall corner pilasters, and the enclosed entry with doorway and narrow sidelights separated by pilasters are notable features. A variation of this house is located at 2317 Opechee Way.



**Raymond & Anna
McLaughlin House**
4014 Manito Boulevard
Ranch, c.1948

The exterior design of this simple house is surprisingly sophisticated. The front facade features a repeated pattern of broad rectangles flanked by vertical bands: the entry flanked by narrow sidelights; picture windows flanked by narrow windows; and porch openings divided by pairs of slender posts. Mr. McLaughlin was a branch manager at Fruehauf Trailer.



**John R. & Alice
Worthman House**
4124 Manito Blvd.
Ranch, 1951

Worthman Trend Home
John Worthman was the prime developer of Indian Village. For his own home he adapted the typical linear plan of the popular ranch style house to an irregular lot to create a rambling, U-shaped building. As the 1951 "Trend Home", this house was used to show off the latest innovations in building and furnishing styles during National Home Week.



**Herman & Margaret
Kohr House**
2220 Opechee Way
Split-Level, c.1940

The Split-Level style became popular as a multi-story modification of the Ranch house. It retained the horizontal emphasis, low-pitched roof, and overhanging eaves but added a two-story unit intercepted at mid-height by a one-story wing to make three floor levels of living space. The garage and family room typically occupied the lower level. This house is the only example of the style in the district.



**James & Margaret
Stephans House**
3920 Nokomis Road
Cape Cod, c.1938

With its central door flanked by two multi-pane windows, and two dormers on the steep roof slope this Cape Cod has an appealing balance. The steeply gabled, attached garage and screened porch, both wonderful amenities, are set back from the front of the house and do not interfere with the symmetry. Mr. Stephans worked at Hillman's China, a downtown gift shop; Mrs. Stephans was a seamstress.



**Harvard & Alta
Hull House**
4020 Hiawatha Blvd.
Contemporary/Ranch, 1952

Worthman Trend Home
This unusual home has a low Ranch style section - containing the garage, recessed entry and large picture window - intersecting with a shed-roofed wing with corner windows. The interesting geometry of the design is reinforced by the broad chimney, golden brick and wide lap siding, and horizontal divisions of the windows.



**Kenneth and Dorothy
Robertson House**
4122 Hiawatha Blvd.
Ranch, c.1954

Long and rambling, this L-shaped Ranch style home features end sections that have smooth masonry walls, a deep trim band under the eaves and slightly recessed windows with shutters and decorative panels. The center section features double doors and vertical siding. Kenneth Robertson was the chief engineer at Central Soya.



**James & Phyllis
Mahuren House**
3620 Meda Pass
Contemporary, c.1954

With its "flat" roof and slab-like overhang this variation of the Contemporary style is often referred to as American International. The use of both horizontal and vertical wood siding, high, horizontal windows at the front corners and a large picture window near the main entry further enhance the unique character of this house. Mr. Mahuren ran Prentice Products, makers of advertising displays.



**Darrell & Laura
Searls House**
3524 Meda Pass
Contemporary, c.1954

The sleek, streamlined design of this Contemporary style house features a very low gabled roof with deep eaves and an attached carport. Windows are set high in the front wall above panels of diagonal wood siding. Raised bands in the brick walls reinforce the horizontal emphasis. This house is part of a cluster of similar designs in this block. Mr. Searls was employed at Westinghouse Electric.



**Indian Village
Elementary School**
3835 Wenonah Lane
Contemporary, 1954

Like most of the surrounding houses, the school was constructed in a low, rambling style popular in the 1950s. The building features both flat and shed roofs with thick overhangs, smooth brick walls with raised panels on the two-story section, and glass block clerestory windows and bands of metal frame windows that enhance the horizontal design. Additions to the building were made in 1955 and 1957 to accommodate the growing student population.

